



Safe sober care for babies and children

A **safe sober caregiver** is a person who is aware you will be using substances and has agreed to care for your baby and /or children during this time. This person has agreed to not use substances at the same time as you.

Why do I need a safe sober caregiver for my baby and/or children? Using substances, being hungover, or coming down can affect your brain and limit your ability to protect your baby and/or children from harm, respond to their needs, and make good decisions. This is the case whether a substance is legal (like alcohol) or illegal (like cannabis), is prescribed by a doctor, or is sourced from a friend.

It is important that your baby/ children are never in a car with anyone who has been using substances or is coming down from substance use.

Substance use can affect your ability to:

- Meet your baby and/or children's needs, like nappy changes, toileting, bath and meal time
- Ensure your babies are sleeping safely
- Understand and recognise your baby/children's emotional needs, like giving attention and playing
- Ensure the people you have in your home are safe for you and your baby and/or children
- Make sure your baby and/or children don't have access to drugs, alcohol and/or medications
- Attend to baby and/or children's medical needs and respond if they physically hurt themselves
- Supervise and keep an eye on your baby and/or children.

How do I choose the right person to be the safe sober caregiver for my baby and/or children?

Things to consider:

Is the person committed to not using alcohol or other drugs while I am using, coming down or hungover?	yes/ no
Are they old enough to look after baby and/or children? How mature are they? In Aotearoa you need to be 14yrs old to look after a child	yes/ no
Have I known them long enough to trust they will care for my baby and/or children?	yes/ no
How well does my baby and/or children know them?	Well/not well
Do they have a history of anger, violence or a "short fuse"?	yes/ no
Have they cared for children before?	yes/ no
Am I able to call them at short notice if I need to?	yes/ no
Have I and the caregiver planned ahead? Are we both well prepared?	yes/ no
Is there anything about the person that makes me uncomfortable or have doubts?	yes/ no
Do they have access to transport if needed?	yes/ no
Would they feel confident to call emergency services?	yes/ no
Do they know how to safely sleep my baby?	yes/ no
Is this someone who is calm under pressure?	yes/ no

Who could my safe sober caregivers be?

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Helpful contacts: Poisons Information 0800 764 766/ PlunketLine 0800 933 922 / AOD helpline 0800 787 797 / Healthline 0800 611 116 / Asian Health Line 0800 88 88 30

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